



New Jersey Department of Children and Families Policy Manual

Manual:	CP&P	Child Protection and Permanency	Effective Date:
Volume:	IX	Administrative	3-24-2015
Chapter:	A	Worker Safety	Revised Date:
Subchapter:	1	General	12-16-2019
Issuance:	150	Teamed Field Response (Buddy System)	

Purpose:

This issuance establishes policy and procedure related to governing Teamed Field Response (Buddy System, Buddy) for the conduct of CP&P case work.

Policy:

A) Teamed Field Response

1. Situations may, and frequently will arise, in the conduct of CP&P work when safety concerns necessitate the assignment of a two-person team to work that would normally be undertaken by a single worker. Such use of a “Teamed Field Response” or “Buddy System,” even when required by this policy, must be communicated to a supervisor, including during SPRU Operations. All SPRU activity qualifies for a “Teamed Field Response” and must be communicated to the SPRU supervisor in counties where there isn’t an already assigned buddy. Teams may be comprised of two (2) workers, or the buddy role may be filled by law enforcement officers, community service providers, or others.
2. Supervisors shall encourage the need for a teamed field response based on consideration of worker safety. Absent compelling reason to do otherwise, deference should be given to the expressed safety concerns of the requesting worker.
3. Supervisors shall not, under any circumstances, unreasonably deny or discourage the use of teamed field response as a means of ensuring worker safety.

B) Approval of Teamed Field Response

1. Even in circumstances requiring a Teamed Field Response (see section C), the supervisor must approve the individual(s) selected to act as a buddy (see section E for buddy options).
2. The supervisor maintains the right to deny a worker-chosen buddy, but must offer/assign another buddy option.

C) Circumstances Requiring Teamed Field Response

1. Workers are required to use a teamed field response in the following circumstances, and must communicate this to a supervisor:
 - i. A teamed field response is required in any case where CP&P records indicate the client has a history involving:
 - a) assaults or threats of violence
 - b) a conviction involving the use of a weapon in the commission of a crime or disorderly persons offense In these situations, the buddy should be the Human Services Police or other law enforcement officials; see [Human Services Police policy](#).
2. A teamed field response is required in all active cases that involve ongoing domestic violence situations, where the alleged batterer resides in or frequents the home. For additional safety precautions, see the [Domestic Violence policy](#).
3. A teamed field response is required in all initial responses to allegations of abuse in unknown (no prior CP&P history) cases, if requested by the assigned worker.
4. A teamed field response is required in all responses to known high crime and initial responses to known drug-use locations. The designation of such known high crime and drug-use areas is to be established by mutual agreement between local office management and field staff on an office-by-office basis. The determination that an area is a high crime or drug-use area must be communicated by local office management to the Area Director as soon as such determination is made. Area Office SPRU Coordinators share this information with SPRU Supervisors and SPRU Workers.
5. A teamed field response is required in all cases in which CP&P is making an out-of-home placement into a resource family home. By assisting the worker, the buddy helps the child by lessening trauma associated with

separation from the family of origin. The buddy permits the assigned worker to focus solely on the child's needs.

6. A teamed response is required in all cases where the worker is transporting a child with known behavioral problems (e.g., a history of sexual acting out, making false accusations, or running away). When transporting a group of children, a teamed field response is necessary in order to assist with supervision of the children while driving to the destination. Requests for assistance by Human Services Police may be appropriate.
7. Previously assaulted field staff are entitled to a buddy until such time as the worker and his or her supervisor jointly decide that a buddy is no longer routinely needed. The input of a crisis counselor or a treating professional may be sought, if agreed to by the worker, to resolve any questions or disputes about the issue of the worker's readiness to respond to routine Division field assignments alone.

D) Teamed Field Response in Other Circumstances

1. Where teamed field response is not *required* by this policy, supervisors may determine that is necessary based on consideration of all circumstances surrounding a case or work environment. If a supervisor determines that a teamed field response is necessary, workers are not permitted to decline.

E) Composition of Teams and Deference to Law Enforcement Accompaniment

1. In all teamed field response situations described above, the buddy may be any of the following:
 - i. Another CP&P staff member;
 - ii. A CP&P supervisor, see [CP&P-III-C-5-100](#);
 - iii. A Family Preservation Service (FPS) worker;
 - iv. A Youth Advocate Program (YAP) staff member;
 - v. A homemaker;
 - vi. A school staff person;
 - vii. A mental health/crisis team worker;
 - viii. A county welfare agency representative;
 - ix. A self-help counselor, such as an authorized Youth Companionship Service Program worker;

- x. A Human Services Police Officer or other law enforcement officer;
or
 - xi. Other individual(s) providing services or assistance to CP&P.
- 2. The supervisor, with input from the worker, determines what other person(s) may serve as a buddy on a particular case situation.
- 3. In any of the above situations where policy or prudence call for a joint response by CP&P and law enforcement (e.g., Human Services Police, local police, county prosecutor office detectives), such law enforcement personnel shall be utilized in lieu of other types of buddies.

Procedures:

A) Recording of Teamed Field Response

- 1. At the conclusion of any case work by a team, a NJ SPIRIT Contact Sheet, CP&P Form [26-52](#), will be completed, which both identifies and includes input from the assigned buddy.

Forms and Attachments:

- CP&P Form [26-52](#), NJ SPIRIT Contact Sheet

Policy History:

- 12-16-19 – Revised Policy
- 3-24-2015 – New Policy